The Correlation Between Family Socioeconomic Status and the Prevalence of Childhood Obesity
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Introduction
Over the past few decades, North America has been experiencing an obesity epidemic. In Canada alone, the prevalence of obesity has increased. In 1976, about 13% of the population was considered obese. In 2008, it is estimated that about 30% of adults in Canada are obese. The prevalence of obesity in Canada differs based on age and sex. In particular, the rate of obesity appears to be greater among young children. According to Nutrition Canada (2012), the rate of obesity is 33.1% among children aged 5 to 11, and 16.2% among children aged 12 to 17. Similar trends are observed among teenagers. The rate of obesity among 18 to 19 year olds was found to be 21.9% in 2008, and 23.7% among 20 to 29 year olds (Spears et al, 2009). Overall, Body Mass Index (BMI) is a commonly used measure for obesity, as it is an easy way to quantify the body fat mass. However, BMI is based on age and height, and the cut-off points used may not be applicable to all age groups.

Research Question/ Objective
The objective of this structured literature review is to investigate the relationship between family socioeconomic status and the prevalence of childhood obesity.

Methods
A structured literature review was conducted in March 2014. Using seven databases (Cochrane Library, EMBASE, MEDLINE, APA, PsycINFO, PubMed, and Cochrane DSSR), we conducted a detailed search through Ovid for studies that examined the relationship between childhood obesity and socioeconomic status. The keywords used were “Childhood Obesity,” “Socioeconomic Status,” “Income,” and “Obesity.” For the purposes of this review, childhood obesity was defined as individuals under 18 years of age. Three trained researchers analyzed the articles and determined whether the articles met the inclusion criteria. Using this approach, the search generated twenty articles. The inclusion criteria consisted of studies that were conducted in North America and had a population that was below 18 years of age. Information about age, criteria, data collection methods, results and definitions for socioeconomic status and obesity were extracted from each of the studies.

Results
Overall, low socioeconomic status increases the prevalence of obesity in children under 18 years of age. However, through this research, we can make a few general conclusions about the relationship between socioeconomic status and the prevalence of childhood obesity. First, the results indicate that children of low SES have a higher prevalence of obesity than those of high SES. The effect of SES on the prevalence of obesity differs depending on the SES level. The term low SES is used to indicate the prevalence of childhood obesity among low SES children and low SES adults. In children, 6% to 11% of age groups, the prevalence of obesity among those with high SES is 3.5% to 5.5% lower than those with a low SES (Cochrane DSSR, 2007). In boys aged 10 to 11, those with a low SES had a 7.5% higher prevalence of obesity than their high SES counterparts (Cochrane DSSR, 2007). This indicates that children of low SES face a higher risk of obesity compared to those of high SES. Low SES children are at a higher risk of obesity than those from high SES families. However, the exact causes of this difference are not well understood.

Discussion
This review investigates the association between low SES and the prevalence of childhood obesity. This review, through its findings, highlights the policies that can be enacted to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity. Although the results indicate that children of low SES have a higher prevalence of obesity than those of high SES, more research is needed to determine why this is the case. Overall, low SES children have a higher prevalence of obesity compared to those of high SES. This indicates that children of low SES face a higher risk of obesity compared to those of high SES. Low SES children are at a higher risk of obesity than those from high SES families. However, the exact causes of this difference are not well understood. The results indicate that children of low SES have a higher prevalence of obesity than those of high SES. This indicates that children of low SES face a higher risk of obesity compared to those of high SES. Low SES children are at a higher risk of obesity than those from high SES families. However, the exact causes of this difference are not well understood.